

Written Testimony of Pam McDonald
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Public Health Committee
March 15, 2013

**CONCERNING HB 6519 AND HB 6527, AN ACT CONCERNING THE
LABELING OF GENERTICALLY ENGINEERED FOODS, AND,
AN ACT CONCERNING GENERTICALLY ENGINEERED BABY FOOD.**

I am writing today to ask you to approve HB 6519 and HB 6527 to label genetically engineered foods in Connecticut. These bills would give Connecticut's citizens the right to know if GMOs (genetically modified organisms) are in our food.

Specifically in my case, I discovered about 3 years ago, through a systematic process of keeping a journal (food consumed, symptoms and timing) that my new and increasingly frequent and severe migraine headaches were related to corn consumption. When I do not eat corn, I do not have migraines.

My food choices are tremendously restricted since corn is so ubiquitous. If GMO corn were labeled I could assess whether my sensitivity is a new allergy to corn, or an effect of GMO corn, and choose accordingly.

Not labeling GMO corn leaves me with no way to sleuth out what works for me. Not labeling GMO corn protects agribusiness at my expense.

I am not alone. There are now so many strange, food-related illnesses that were utterly uncommon in my childhood. Without GMO labeling, citizens troubled by migraines and other increasingly common food-related issues are impeded in managing their conditions.

Modern medications can make the most severe symptoms disappear, but often leave the migraine sufferers like me vague, dizzy, and nauseous. They are costly, especially for those on fixed incomes. In addition, these medications mask the prevalence of migraines so that other citizens have no idea how seriously the public is affected, nor how prevalent food-related migraines and illnesses are.

By the way, doctors may say "there is no proof that GMO foods are unhealthy," but that does not mean there is no danger from GMO foods. If my experience is relevant, it just means sufficiently well-designed research has not been done. In the meantime, anecdotal evidence suggests that it is time for more research. Personal and public health research is supported when GMO foods are labeled.

I implore you to support our right to know what is in our food and in our children's food by approving HB 6519 and HB 6527 to label genetically engineered foods in Connecticut.

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